DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 228 439 CE 035 949

AUTHOR Hummel, Thomas J.; Robinson, Judith A.
TITLE Documenting CETA Employment Counseling Expertise: A Problem in Knowledge Engineering.
PUB DATE Apr 83
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, Montreal, Canada, April 11-14, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Counseling; Counseling Techniques; *Counselor Training; *Employment Counselors; Employment Programs; Federal Legislation; *Federal Programs; Instructional Materials; Job Training; *Material Development; *Peer Teaching
IDENTIFIERS *Comprehensive Employment and Training Act; Knowledge Engineering; Minnesota

ABSTRACT

The development of a program for the training of Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) counselors in Minnesota was the occasion for an exercise in "knowledge engineering." A "situation book" approach was designed to help structure and organize the specialized knowledge accumulated by experienced counselors and to allow them to share their knowledge. Less experienced counselors were initially provided exposure to standard counseling theory and practice. Eighteen more experienced counselors engaged in intensive, case-based discussions with each other and provided detailed descriptions of successful and unsuccessful cases in their experience. Data were developed into a "situation book" consisting of five interrelated sections presenting an overview of the CETA counselor's task in the form of exemplary case descriptions followed by a breakdown of the task into component parts. The book covered client traits and behaviors, categories of optional actions, sample rules for selecting and using the actions, and CETA case management. During the last 6 days of training, the experienced counselors trained their peers in workshops they designed to teach the materials in the situation book. (Appendixes, amounting to over one-half of the paper, include counselor training materials and sample pages from the situation book.) (YLB)

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Documenting CETA Employment Counseling Expertise: A Problem in Knowledge Engineering

by

Thomas J. Hummel
University of Minnesota

and

Judith A. Robinson
Fingerhut Corporation

A paper presented to the
American Educational Research Association
Montreal, 1983

CE035569

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The search for efficient, cost effective methods of structuring and transferring expertise has long been a high priority in military and industrial settings where the ability to train large numbers of novices quickly and uniformly is a critical factor in the successful achievement of organizational goals. Techniques developed for application in these settings have focused, for the most part, on fairly well defined and clearly structured manual tasks and procedures which can be broken down and structured for presentation in algorithmic form with relative ease. The allocation of substantial resources to the development of training programs to teach specific skills and certain kinds of technical knowledge has resulted in the availability of quite sophisticated and effective methods of transferring this kind of expertise to learners.

Much less is known, however, concerning effective ways of structuring and transmitting expertise based on complex cognitive representations and processes which develop slowly over time through repeated exposure to particular types of situations in which finely tuned judgments must be made and carefully selected actions taken. This type of expertise often focuses on people more than data or things, and frequently involves performing "ill structured" tasks for which there is little formal documentation of procedures. These are the types of tasks which the experts appear to perform by "magic," functioning according to decision rules of which they themselves may be only partially aware. Although there is certainly a well developed set of principles which define "technique" in fields such as counseling, teaching and "people management" in business settings, the techniques usually taught can only address the rudimentary skills. The content of the expertise acquired by the experienced, high performing practitioners of these ill structured arts remains mysterious to the novice. In these fields, we continue to depend upon the slow accretion of knowledge through time and experience for the development of true expertise.

The project described here addressed the question: "Is there an efficient way to access and document the knowledge and skills of experts in the performance of ill-structured tasks so as to make the expertise more available to novices?" The occasion for the exercise in "knowledge engineering" was the development of a program for the training of CETA counselors in the state of Minnesota. Supported by a Department of Labor grant to the

Minnesota Department of Economic Security, the project objective was to provide CETA counselors across the state with training in counseling. Since such training was not necessarily a prerequisite for employment in a CETA counseling position, the target group varied widely in education, experience and exposure to formal counselor training.

In designing the program, it was decided that a primary objective should be to provide an opportunity for the more experienced, formally trained counselors to engage in intensive, case-based discussions with each other. For the less experienced counselors, it was felt that the program should not only provide exposure to standard counseling theory and practice, but also to the special knowledge and expertise of the more advanced group among their own colleagues.

To meet these objectives, a "two track" program was designed, with the first track (Focus A) targeting the less experienced counselors who desired formal training in counseling fundamentals. The second track (Focus B) was designed for more experienced counselors and represented an experiment in a method of structuring and documenting the counselors' expertise. The result of the Focus B program was the production of a "Situation Book," a hierarchically structured reference book for CETA counselors representing the combined knowledge of 18 experienced counselors who participated in the project. During the last of the six days of training provided for participants in both tracks, the Focus B counselors trained their peers in workshops they designed to teach the materials in the Situation Book.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The design of the Focus B program was based upon certain assumptions about the nature of the CETA counselor's work and upon a particular theoretical perspective concerning the nature of expertise and the nature of cognition.

First, the CETA counselor was seen as working, like other counselors, with a set of available actions to be taken under particular conditions. The counselor's effectiveness depends on being able to "diagnose" the client's situation, interpreting information about the client and selecting appropriate actions to

be taken in a sequence leading to the desired goal.

The CETA counselor's role, however, went beyond that of many other counselors. In guiding their clients toward economic independence, the CETA counselors were dealing with some of the most intractable of personal, social and economic problems. Much of the theory on which most current counseling practice is based, however, derives from the experience of psychologists and psychotherapists who generally work with clients described as YAVIS -- young, attractive, verbal, intelligent and successful. Counseling approaches which succeed with these clients are often less successful when tried with people burdened, as are many clients of programs such as CETA, with a variety of social, economic, educational and other disadvantages.

In sum, the CETA counselor, who may or may not have started out with much formal training or experience applicable to the job, had to: 1) be able to deal with difficult client problems within a framework of serious legal, budgetary and time constraints; 2) manage a considerable array of resources; and 3) maintain effective communication with educators, family members and helping professionals from other agencies.

The Situation Book approach was designed to help structure and organize the specialized knowledge accumulated by experienced counselors and to allow them to share their knowledge with each other and interested outsiders. As a directory or guide to the CETA counselor's activities, it serves to document typical situations they confronted and the strategies they devised to meet those situations and help their clients.

The theoretical perspective upon which this "knowledge engineering" project was based might loosely be labeled as a "cognitive science" approach, focusing on the building of prototypes and cognitive structures, the sequencing of actions and the identification and teaching of "production systems" as described by Newell and Simon (1972).

The Situation Book got its name from the idea that expertise -- "know how" -- is based on "situation-action" rules, or productions, used by experts to decide when to take particular actions and in what order. While the most elementary actions carried out by highly skilled experts are known to virtually all adults, the situation-action rules are missing. For example, most adults would

know the basic operations necessary to fly an airplane. We can push buttons, flip levers, pull handles, speak, observe and so forth. What we don't know is when to carry out these actions, what sequences are necessary, or what cues are important. The "knowing how," what J.R.Anderson (1976) has called procedural knowledge, is in large part "knowing when." The importance of the expert's knowledge of when to carry out actions and the ability to create hierarchical structures for storage of knowledge is also suggested by Hayes-Roth and Hayes-Roth's (1979) study of the planning process, which emphasized the critical dimensions of "time" and "abstraction."

The conceptual hierarchies which store the expert's knowledge represent the abstraction dimension of the planning process, and can exist for both situations and actions. In the counseling setting, for example, a counselor might observe and interpret specific client characteristics in the context of more global traits which in turn are organized as "prototypes." (Shaver, 1981) The specific client thus might be identified as belonging to a prototype called "Displaced Homemaker." For actions, simple operations are chained into procedures which in turn become part of more global designs at the top of the action hierarchy. In the Hayes-Roth and Hayes-Roth description of the planning process, this hierarchical principle applies even to the selection of actions through situation-action rules. Rules dealing with operations are referred to as tactics; procedures are selected according to strategies. The strategies are arranged into more global structures called "schemes."

One goal of knowledge engineering is to use the hierarchical structures described above to gather information from experts and to develop computer algorithms and data structures which model the expert's knowledge and behavior. In a fairly well structured area such as medical diagnosis, a single expert may be able to provide sufficient information for the model. The process of developing the model, however, can be costly and time consuming.

METHOD

Given the limitations of time and financial resources, the CETA project design could not be built around the development of a computer model. The Situation Book represented an intermediate

step toward such a model by representing client descriptors, actions and situation-action rules along with case studies and prototypic clients. The primary objective was to represent this information in useable form as a training model, not to attempt a representation of how an expert counselor "really" thinks or operates.

To develop the knowledge base to be structured along the lines outlined above, 18 experienced CETA counselors were selected to participate in a series of structured activities designed on the basis of detailed case descriptions they were asked to write about both successful and unsuccessful cases in their experience. A format for the case studies was mailed to each participant a month prior to the start of the first Focus B session to allow time for counselors to write the descriptions and return them to the designers.

Two intensive one-day sessions of individual and structured group interactions , some directly based on case materials provided by the counselors, generated more information. The 18 counselors were divided into groups of six, each with a trained facilitator to act as leader. Each group carried out exercises designed to generate information on A) Client Categories, B) Goals and Needs, C) Counselor Action Options and D, Case Problem Solving. Each structured experience included three phases: 1) a short period of individual brainstorming with written output on a given issue or question, 2) a small group process designed to pool individual knowledge and refine ideas generated by brainstorming and 3) a large group "share back" session in which the small groups reported results and critiqued the ideas. Ideas and lists generated by individuals and groups were carefully recorded and saved for analysis. Appendix A provides a sampling of the stimulus materials used to generate ideas and discussion.

By the end of two days, the designers had available a wealth of data on prototypic CETA clients, the characteristics and problems of those clients and the actions experienced counselors took to address the problems and achieve their goals. For their part, the counselors had participated in intensive discussion with peers from across the state concerning mutual problems and issues and strategies for dealing with their own problem cases.

A third session was scheduled for a month later. During the

interim, the designers analyzed the data generated by the first session and developed the structures which made up the Situation Book. The labels for categories of information reflected, as much as possible, the descriptive language used by counselors.

At the third session, counselors reviewed and critiqued the Situation Book, presented to them in draft form, and divided into teams to design the training sessions which would introduce the book to their colleagues. Each team then served as co-facilitators for the workshops which made up the final training session, in which the Focus A and Focus B groups were brought together for the wrap up of the training process.

THE SITUATION BOOK

The Situation Book, as explained above, was designed to make explicit the specialized "know how" the experienced counselors had pooled in raw form during their first brainstorming session. The knowledge was considered to include 1) the ability to recognize and interpret a variety of data presented by and about a client, 2) ability to develop an hypothesis about the client and the client's problems, leading to a set of goals for "treatment," 3) ability to select from among a wide range of possible actions the ones most likely to succeed with a particular client in a particular situation, and 4) ability to decide on a sequence for carrying out the planned actions and to implement them as planned.

The Situation Book consists of five interrelated sections presenting an overview of the CETA counselor's task in the form of exemplary case descriptions followed by a breakdown of the task into component parts. The first parts presented concern client traits and behaviors, followed by categories of optional actions and sample rules for selecting and using the actions. The last two sections of the Book show how the parts come together in CETA case management. Strategic designs for working with particular types of clients are presented and whole cases analyzed in terms of client traits, goals and alternative actions available to the counselor.

Section I presents three CETA cases selected to provide the context for the "CETA situation," the clients, their problems, the issues the counselor must confront, and a sample of the types of actions available.

Section II focuses on specific traits and characteristics typical of the clientele. This section serves as a directory of behavioral cues and client responses which point to a set of actions appropriate to the client exhibiting these traits and behaviors.

Section III is oriented toward action, providing lists of simple actions and sample "situation-action" rules giving the conditions under which the actions would be most likely to succeed.

Section IV begins a "reconstruction" process, focusing on categories of CETA clients defined by clusters of behaviors and problems and presenting combinations of actions which might be considered with each client prototype.

Section V is designed to integrate information from previous sections in a series of whole cases analyzed from the point of view of client problem, counselor goals for the client, and the effectiveness of selecting particular actions to suit the situation.

Sample pages from each section may be found in Appendix B.

OUTCOMES

For the 18 counselors participating in the Focus B training sessions, the experience provided a rare opportunity to exchange ideas and to articulate and structure their own specialized expertise in a concrete, useable format. Comments from less experienced counselors upon completion of the final training session indicated that the Situation Book was regarded as a valuable future resource. Although subsequent cutbacks in the CETA program statewide made it difficult to follow up on the project in a systematic way, it does provide a concrete example of the application of the theoretical perspective described above. The

method used is potentially applicable to structuring expertise in a wide variety of fields.

EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The approach to training described here achieved several important goals:

1) It expanded each participant's knowledge of a range of options available to address a given situation.

2) It produced a greater awareness of and ability to specifically identify the conditions under which a particular action would be most likely to succeed.

3) It resulted in enhanced ability to communicate with other CETA counselors by using a common "vocabulary" of terms.

Beyond these achievements, the project demonstrates a workable and economical method for gathering and structuring information from a group of experts whose expertise is in a non-standardized and ill-structured area.

One might conclude here with a comment made by Papert (1980), who wrote about the simple process of teaching someone to ride a bycycle, ". . .the question about the bicycle is not whether one can tell someone in full how to ride, but rather what can be done to improve our ability to communicate with others (and ourselves through internal dialogues) just enough to make a difference to learning to ride." (p.86)

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APPENDIX A

Exercise #1
"What Would You do?. . ."

The object of this exercise is to begin to develop a list of alternative actions available to CETA counselors in working with clients. Later activities will involve pooling your ideas with those of others and developing some definitions and guidelines for choosing particular actions to take with particular types of clients.

1. Read through the attached client/situation descriptions.

2. Go back and develop a list of actions you might take as a counselor if confronted with this client and this set of problems.

Note: Try to develop alternative actions where possible. You may draw on similar experiences you have had with your own clients in thinking about options available to counselors in these kinds of circumstances.

In some cases, you may be able to think of a sequence of actions to be followed in meeting the conditions described.

The term "action" includes activities such as listening, confronting, and encouraging the venting of feelings as well as actions like referral to Job Skills Workshop or have client take CAI, etc.

Don't worry about screening too much. This is a brainstorming activity...

"Vi"

(1) Background: Client was registered with the CETA program. She was seeking training and placement assistance. Goals needed to be defined and a program developed.

Vi is a 25-year-old, Black, recent resident in metropolitan area. Native of large industrial city in Indiana. Her father is a Baptist minister. She is a bright, pleasant person with fairly clear-cut goals. She has a 1-year clerical certificate from Indiana University.

(2) Physical Setting: My office in a metropolitan CETA center. A YWCA residence reception area. A hotel coffee shop. A mental health facility.

(3) Timing: The case duration was approximately 3 months. Approximately four weeks with one contact per week were needed to develop her program.

(4) Sequence of Events: My intake interview with Vi involved collecting background data, establishing rapport, defining possible alternatives, and initiating assessment. She was given a Career Assessment Inventory and scheduled for clerical testing--her reported interest area. She was requesting a short-term clerical brushup program which hopefully would aid her job search. Her plan had a logical progression. I suggested that we explore the possibility of a work/study situation. She was willing to explore the possibility. Our next meetings served to facilitate her enrollment in a training program and to develop a work site. A position was developed in the CETA center as a clerical worker. Vi had completed approximately two months of her 3-month program when I received word that she had had a psychotic-type episode in which she physically attacked her supervisor and several co-workers. She was restrained by one of the male staff members who escorted her to her residence at the YWCA.

"Tim"

(1) Background: Tim is a 16-year-old who has had continual problems with the law. He was suspended from school and has charges pending against him.

(2) Physical Setting: Foster Home
Olmsted County Jail
PORT Group Home

(3) Timing: This case lasted for about three months.

(4) Sequence of Events: Tim was referred to me by Court Services. It was felt that being in a foster home and working would improve Tim's behavior. I interviewed Tim and questioned him concerning his behavior. We discussed his interests and job possibilities. We set an appointment to visit the vocational school and discussed temporary employment. Tim started working the next week and his first two job reports were good. Tim ran away after the second week and the next time I saw him he was in jail.

"John"

(1) Background: John is a 40-year-old exconvict who also has chemical dependency problems. He only completed the 6th grade and would be considered functionally illiterate. He is married and has four stepchildren, one which has heart problems.

(2) Physical Setting: My office and Rochester Vo Tech

(3) Timing: Approximately 10 months which included two critical episodes.

(4) Sequence of Events: John entered the CETA program to help obtain employment. The family had been on Welfare for almost a year and there was a lot of tension due to lack of money and personal problems. John's aptitude test showed very low scores in math and verbal ability. We visited the vocational school to check programs of Auto Mechanics which was John's interest area. The instructor felt John could finish the program and John enrolled in school. He did very well in the shop but even with a tutor had difficulty with bookwork. During this period, John was having problems with his wife's exhusband. We problem solved the situation and John's wife had a restraining order written to her exhusband. His stepdaughter had open-heart surgery in the fall and John missed several days of school. He couldn't catch up in auto mechanics but switched to a welding program and caught up in about 3 weeks. At this time, I was notified that John had left and his wife didn't know where he was. He came back in ten days and was not sure where he had been.

Exercise #2
Small Group Work

Part 1.

1. Each member of the group should summarize the case and present lists of actions, with other members of the group asking questions to clarify what is meant by the action and considering other situations where that action might be used.

2. Develop a brief definition for each action. (For example, what does it mean to "confront" a client? When you "support expressions of anger," what are you doing with the client?)

3. Whether you take a particular action with a client or not depends on many factors. In general, what factors are the most important? As a group, discuss and list what are the most important factors guiding your selection of actions. (For example, client characteristics and emotional state, your feelings, CETA policies, etc.)

Part 2.

1. Look over the lists of actions and begin to consider in your group how various actions can be clustered around client types in each of four categories: "Initial," "Planning," "Maintenance," and "Closure."*

Note: Many, or most of your list of actions will be used with all clients at one time or another, depending on conditions. Cluster actions you think you would tend to use more often or would be more likely to use with a particular type of client.

You may find actions which are so common that you will want to create a "general" action list. Later you can consider some of the conditions which would cause you to take those actions.

As an example of a cluster:

"Low Self Esteem Client"

--Frequent personal meetings
--Positive feedback
--Protected work experience
--Referral to support group
--Assertiveness training

(etc.)

*Intake and Initial Relationship Building
Plan Development Actions
Ongoing Maintenance and Implementation Actions
Termination/Closure Actions

Exercise #3
Large Group

1. Each of the small groups will report to the larger group on alternative actions selected for each of the cases analyzed by members of the group and present lists of actions derived from the discussion, and short definitions.

   Discussion will focus on developing a complete list of possible actions for each of the four areas of counseling activities.

2. Small groups will report on actions which seemed to fit with particular client types.

APPENDIX B

UNRESPONSIVE:

Emotions Stifled - Supresses feeling; no discussion of feelings with others; does not acknowledge emotions to self.

Unmotivated - Is indifferent to suggestions, takes no initiative, loses interest quickly, appears bored, skips appointments and misses classroom training sessions.

Extrinsic Motivation - Only does what is wanted by peers, counselor or family; has no internal desire to do something for self.

NEGATIVE EMOTION TOWARD OTHERS:

Mood Swings - Unpredictable shifts from passive to hostile.

Intimidating - Uses abusive, threatening language; makes unreasonable demands.

Belligerent - Angry at the world; argumentative.

Aggressive - "Pushy," sometimes uses threatening language.

Short Tempered - Testy; easily offended; irritable; impatient.

RESISTANT/AGRESSIVE:

Blamer - Insists others are responsible for problems; angry toward "system" because of past failures; accepts no personal responsibility for current situation.

Fault-Finder - Complains about everything; may never get into a job because nothing is "perfect" enough.

Resentful - Feels abused, bitter toward others; is envious, feels others have gotten better breaks.

Negative - Complains constantly, finds nothing good to say about anything; expects the worst at all times.

RESISTANT TO CONTROLS:

Demanding - Feels entitled to services; says "what are you going to do for me?" has a "they owe me" attitude; abuses system - wants exceptions to the rules; demands counselor time beyond normal expectations.

Overconfident - Overestimates own abilities and talents; has grandiose ideas, resents suggestions of limitations or checks on big plans.

Denies Limitations - Seems overconfident, won't confront problems, takes "all or nothing" view toward job search, "if I can't have what I want, then I don't want anything."

Manipulative - Tries to get around rules or requirements, tries to use counselor to attain own ends; may appear friendly in order to influence counselor, tells lies.

Defiant - Refuses to follow rules, rules don't apply; says "I don't care what happens" to self or others.

RESISTANT/RIGID:

Uncooperative - Forced to come to CETA; refuses to follow through; is stubborn; sabotages interviews and classroom training.

Stubborn - See uncooperative. Refuses to consider others' viewpoints; won't change ideas even when presented with new information.

Resists Change - Is rigid and inflexible; works to stay in rut.

Resists Training Suggestions - Resents being told of limitations, does not believe in need for retraining or further training.

Narrow Focus - Only has one idea in mind, won't consider alternatives; resistant to exploration; some say "I just want to make $___ an hour.

Won't Listen - Already knows the answers; doesn't want advice or counseling.

RESISTS AUTHORITY/THE "SYSTEM":

Distrustful - Does not believe in promises of help; is closed rather than open; does not want to talk about personal problems or feelings.

Suspicious of "System" - Has had bad experiences with welfare; does not trust authority; concerned about "selling out."

Street Ethic - Has support from peers for "anti-system" way of life; sees nothing wrong with "working the system" while staying outside of it; blames "society" for problems; uses chemicals.

Macho/Tough - Does not want to talk about feelings; hard to accept help.

Hates School - Does not want to participate in any structured training program, including workshops.

Hates "Boss-Types"

Angry At System - Feels betrayed by those in authority.

RESISTANT/AVOIDING:

Makes Excuses - Always has excuses for past or present failures; takes little personal responsibility for own choices and actions.

Defensive - Denies past failures; has rationale for problems; gets testy or loses temper if confronted; will not accept constructive feedback.

RESISTANT/WITHHOLDING:

Secretive - Has secrets, won't share information about self with counselor; says "I don't want to talk about that."

Evasive - Avoids discussion of problems; tries to change subject if sensitive issue is raised; avoids specific commitments.

RESISTANT/LACK OF STRUCTURE:

Impulsive - Acts on whims; can give no reason for actions.

Haphazard in Program - Drops in and out, misses appointments, is unreliable.

Lacks Follow Through - Makes commitments but doesn't keep promises.

Procrastinator - Puts things off, misses deadlines and appointments, makes excuses.

Not Serious - Treats CETA as a lark, no commitment or follow through.

PERSONAL HABITS/NEGATIVE IMPRESSION ON OTHERS:

Poor Body Hygiene - Noticeable body odor; bad teeth; appears dirty; hair not clean.

Poor Grooming - Sloppy, inappropriate dress; hair unkept; unshaven.

Poor Manners - No sense of nonverbal impression on others; slovenly posture, sits slouched over; rude or loud mouth; interrupts; does not apologize for being late or for other offensive behavior.

Poor Work Habits - Not punctual; absent often; disorganized or slow; no sense of responsibility to other employees.

Hard to Get Up - Hates to get up in the morning.

Attention Seeking Behavior - Makes scenes by crying or losing temper, manufactures problems; frequent calls to counselor for minor or trivial reasons, "hangs round" counselor's office to elicit more of the counselor's time/attention.

Assign:

The counselor gives the client specific tasks to be carried out. A deadline is often set for completing the task.

Used to get client moving; specific assignments used to meet specific counseling goals; sometimes used to test out client's commitment, motivation, ability to follow through.

Examples of assignments might include making cold calls, carrying out informational interviews with employers, looking at want ads to learn about different kinds of jobs, going to a school to look over facilities, talking with other students in a program (such as GED).

Sample conditions for using assignment actions:

If dubious about client's commitment and follow through, try assignment of simple tasks to test follow through before providing resources.

If client wants "job now" and is resistant to training suggestions, assign informational interviews with employers.

If client employment goals are unrealistic, assign to read actual job descriptions.

Acknowledge:

The counselor lets the client know in a nonjudgmental way that the client's feelings, problems or concerns have been heard and are understood. Related to empathy, but can be more neutral. Counselor may not be as actively engaged with client's feelings. Acknowledgement does not necessarily imply empathic responding on the part of the counselor.

Used to assure client that message is being received and understood. May be used instead of empathic responding when counselor wishes to avoid reinforcing a particular client feeling or behavior. Can include reflection of feeling (empathy).

Examples of acknowledging statements include "I understand," "I hear you," "I know what you mean," "I see," "You feel...;" nonverbals include eye contact, head nodding, other signs of responsiveness.

Sample conditions for using acknowledgement:

If you want to avoid endorsing or reinforcing a client's feelings, use acknowledgement responses to client statement; you may wish to make clear you are not necessarily agreeing with the client, even though you hear and understand what the client is saying.

Confront:

Counselor makes direct statements to client about behaviors, conditions or facts of record which adversely affect the client's relationship to the counselor and/or success in CETA.

Used when the client seems to be avoiding an issue, denying a problem, violating verbal or written contracts, or resisting suggestions for solutions. Usually implies that client is asked to acknowledge negative information about self and to respond in a constructive way. Can cause anger, denial, blaming, defensiveness, and in some cases, early walk out.

Examples include confronting the client with discrepancies between statements and actual behavior, as when client claims to be drug free but exhibits behavior typical of active chemical dependency; other types of issues include client behavior such as truancy, absenteeism, attempts to manipulate the counselor, active chemical dependency, poor personal hygiene and self defeating behavior such as missing job interview appointments or failing to take prescribed medication.

Sample conditions for confronting a client:

If the client denies problems with training program, confront with discrepancies between own statement and statements by instructors.

If client avoids discussing chemical dependency issues, confront with facts about current behaviors and consequences with regard to CETA success.

If you must confront an aggressive client who might "act out," involve other staff, make sure support and witnesses are available.

If the client clings to dependent role by denying skills, abilities or other strengths, confront the client with discrepancies between statements and/or self image and test results or past successes.*

*In this case, confronting is used to get client to accept positive information, rather than negative information.

Conditions for successful confronting:

-Privacy: Client should be protected from fear of others hearing the conversation when topic is sensitive.

-Rapport between counselor and client: Client should feel trust toward counselor and be aware of counselor's positive motives for presenting negative information.

-Existence of positive, as well as negative, information: Stress positive factors in client behavior or situation before and after confronting on a problem issue. Help client save face. Use praise as positive reinforcement for corrective actions on client's part.

-Appropriate timing: Confront on issue at a time when it is relevant for the client. For example, if client has poor personal hygiene or grooming, confront issues when discussing job interviews.

-Direct, matter-of-fact manner: Client must sense that you are being direct, honest, factual, respectful, straightforward, not accusatory or critical.

Note: If the client is passive or has low self esteem, trying giving positive directions rather than confronting with negative information as a first choice strategy.

Example: When discussing job interviews with client, give a checklist or directions about dress, hygiene and grooming, stressing importance of appearance and impression on employer. If directions are followed, client need not be confronted with negative feedback.

Contract:

Counselor clearly states goals, outlines counselor role, states expectations for elicne behaviors and performance, sets out conditions for provision of resources or termination, states mutual responsibilities of client and counselor, and elicits client acknowledgement and commitment to mutually agreed upon plan of procedure. Contract may be verbal or written down.

Used whenever counselor wants to gain commitment from client to a course of action or to assure client understanding of rules, policies and procedures to be followed. A written contract also provides a record of such understanding and commitment.

Examples include using a contract to make CETA rules and policies explicit, to spell out client and counselor obligations and rights, to set specific behavioral and performance goals for client, to set conditions for continuation in program or termination from CETA. The EDP is a form of contract.

Sample conditions for using contracts:

If starting with a new client, set up a contract to spell out CETA policies, conditions for provision of services, continuation of services and termination.

If using a "verbal contract" write contract in your own notes for future reference.

If monetary resources are being provided for client, prepare a written contract spelling out expectations, conditions for providing resources, limits on resources to be provided, and the conditions for withdrawing resources. Client and counselor both sign.

If resources are more "personal," such as extra time from the counselor to help the client with a problem, then use a verbal contract.

If client has violated the contract or is having problems living up to it, consider rewriting the contract with a more specific, narrow focus.

If client has experienced a major crises or setback, use a behavioral contract to get client moving again toward specific, achievable behavioral goals.

"SITUATION-ACTION"

If: Distanced from reality

Then: Inform them of test scores and job market information

Allow (if dropping out not a danger), let them learn from experience.

Assign informational interviews

Refer to a group where their ideas may be challenged by peers.

If: Immature

Then: Inform about world of work realities

Place in work experience program to provide more knowledge of employment reality. Try to find a suitable reinforcer for successes

Refer to group with positive, influential role models.

If: Lacks knowledge of "the world"

Then: Inform about reality of job market

Involve (if culture barrier) established family member, ESL teacher or other influential outside party to help communicate

Make decisions to generate alternatives, goal clarification, occupational information

Place (if culture barrier) may need to get into job quickly and continue education while learning about the culture on the job.

If: Fearful

Then: Develop trust

Initiate contact on the client's behalf

Allow expression of feelings

Coordinate the actions of others to make sure a suitable pace is maintained

Provide resources when possible to help relieve worries

If: Lost and alone

Then: Inform through test results, review of past experience and occupation information, create a picture of how client can fit in

If: Resistant-avoiding

Then: Develop trust to overcome client's fears, promote openness and sense of confidence; elicit client's image of self

Develop self-esteem, building self confidence and positive self image

Confront on avoidance behavior, stressing positives and using face-saving tactics

Inform, giving realistic appraisal of strengths and limitations

Contract with client for small achievable tasks

Monitor to check on follow through

Reinforce positive achievements

If: Resistant-withholding

Then: Develop trust

Confront client with your sense that client is not being open

Refer to group of peers to encourage sharing

Contract in writing, use narrow behavioral focus and small steps for commitment

Reinforce sharing

Place on basis of information you already have

Refer for mental health evaluation if serious mental health problem may exist due to problem in past

If: Resistant-lack of structure

Then: Inform making sure consequences of nonperformance are clear

Contract verbally or in writing if needed, keeping contracts specific and simple

Monitor closely to check on performance

Reinforce all follow through, even on small matters

Refer to group setting where peer feedback on nonperformance is provided.

If: Personal habits-negative impression on others

Then: Inform perhaps using a checklist on what is expected by employers

Refer to group where group feedback is provided

Confront on habits and need to change ways for employment

Contract verbally to practice new behaviors during CETA appointments

Reinforce changes, use CETA services as motivato.

If: Addicted

Then: Refer for evaluation and treatment

Coordinate any CETA involvement possible while treatment continues.

If: Skills barriers

Then: Place in training/educational program

Refer to group if social skills or JSS are the problem

Inform (teach) about simple skills such as budgeting, dealing with anger, sometimes job interviewing; use role play to have client practice.

If: Limiting conditions

Then: Refer where needed for long term counseling or therapy for serious mental illness

Refer to educational special services for learning disability

Find out from client strategies used to cope with limitations

Provide extra resources where needed

Make decisions; generate alternative ways to cope within constraints imposed by limits

Initiate contact; be active at first, help with problems by going along to appointments, etc.

Coordinate with other personnel.

"THE KID"

CLIENT DESCRIPTION

Age 22 or younger, high school drop-out

Little or no stable work history

Feels: angry at system

Attitudes/Dispositions: Naive - uninformed about work; unrealistic about goals; fantasizes about romantic jobs; unfocused; impatient and demanding, feels "the world owes me;" wants easy way out, doesn't want to have to work hard to achieve a goal; blames others for problems; immature, dependent, wants counselor to do the work; lack of follow through; short term focus with little sense of planning for the future; manipulative; distrustful - cautious about putting trust in "system" or in authority; externally motivated - by family or counselor; adapts poorly to structure.

Limiting Factors/Skills/Resources: poor work habits; dysfunctional peer group; history of chemical use; poor models of workers; family history of chemicals; poor or no marketable skills.

ACTION PLAN

Inform about job market and test scores

Allow client to pursue own ideas and learn from experience unless danger of drop-out

Place in work experience program

Monitor for support and follow through (monitor with beginning of each new step such as training and employment)

Contract verbally, making responsibilities clear

Place in training

Contract in writing to follow through on training

Refer to group for job seeking skills

Place in employment, maybe OJT

"SENT BY WELFARE"

CLIENT DESCRIPTION

Work History: no stable job for a three to six year period

Feels: fearful of losing welfare

Attitudes/Dispositions: low risk takers; low self-esteem; self defeating behaviors--may sabotage interviews; unrealistic expectations, says "I will do anything but. . .," dependent, on family, on welfare.

Limiting Factors/Skills/Resources: has multiple barriers to employment--no transportation, health problems, daycare, etc.

ACTION PLAN

(NOTE: The probability of success in these cases may not be high. The counselor may prefer to spend time with clients more likely to be successful. However, rushing such cases makes the likelihood of success even more remote.)

Allow the expression of fears and worries

Acknowledge the feelings

Develop trust

Initiate contacts on client's behalf (at this point, client's dependency is being allowed to continue).

Coordinate actions with other agencies to assist in providing resources which will be contingent on CETA actions

Assign small achievable tasks

Reinforce successes

Reinforce positive self-references

Inform about policies and test scores more as time goes by

Contract verbally for several narrowly defined tasks, re-contract if necessary

Assign more sustantial tasks, such as informational interviews

Provide resources to enable client to carry out actions

Develop self-esteem

Place in training or refresher

"OLDER DISPLACED WORKER"

CLIENT DESCRIPTION

Aged 50 or more, ususally male but may be female, laid off, fired or forced out of long time job because of disability.

Work History: usually good; stable employment in a particular field over long period.

Feels: useless; betrayed; fearful; worried about aging and time passing; embarrassed and humiliated; dreams shattered; hurt pride; anxious about security, loss of benefits, feels identity has been lost.

Attitudes/Dispositions: low self-esteem, poor self concept; low risk-taking behavior; grateful for help, but finds it hard to accept help; may have unrealistic work goals; unsure of job search techniques; resists retraining; committed to work ethic; likes routine; can be very demanding but may be self effacing and undemanding instead.

Limiting Factors/Skills/Resources: may have health problems; heavy family responsibilities and obligations causing financial pressure.

Assets: Marketable skills in one area, good work history, wants to work, can work hard.

ACTION PLAN

Acknowlege feelings

Inform, giving data showing client is not to blame for situation

Provide resources where possible to help relieve worries

Inform through test results, review of past experience and occupation information to create a picture of how client can fit in.

Inform of positives and strengths

Inform about reality of job market and possibilities for retraining

Make Decisions, particularly generating options and clarifying goals

Confront on denial of own strengths

Refer to group for job seeking skills

Place as soon as possible to restore identity as a worker

CASE THREE

"JANE"

Background

"Jane" applied to CETA for aid in her job search after prodding from step-mother to "pay her own way." Jane was aware of the CETA program as her brother had been a client at a prior time. She appeared eager to find employment primarily to be financially independent of her family.

Characters

Counselor - Female, age 33. Began job same month as Jane's application to program

Client - "Jane" was 18 years old upon application. She was a high school drop-out with a work history of maid and assembly positions. These positions had been voluntarily terminated by Jane because of their monotony. She had mediocre typing skills gained while still in high school. First impression of Jane was one of an attractive, friendly and motivated young lady above average intelligence and self-confidence.

Physical Settings

CETA Center and the Area Vocational Institute. I made approximately two trips a week to make client contact.

Timing:

Jane's case was active with the CETA program for 10 months. Contacts were daily for the first 3½ months and bi-weekly for the remaining months.

Sequence of Events

1) Upon acceptance of Jane into the CETA program, it was recommended by the Intake Committee that she be put into the Work Experience component with our office, as at that time we were seeking clerical help and Jane had moderate clerical skills. It was agreed upon at this time Jane would be working with a counselor to establish career goals. One of the steps in her development plan was to obtain her GED. She also indicated a desire to obtain her drivers license so as to be less dependent on others for transportation. I encouraged her to study her drivers training manual and begin work on her GED.

2) After being in her W.E. position for approximately 2 weeks, Jane became less motivated to perform her job duties and lax about punctuality. She preferred to befriend staff members and spent much time eliciting their attention. She accomplished this by disclosing information about her family and personal problems. It was at this time that I talked with her about the importance of getting to work on time. I explained that others depended on her and this was a responsibility to be taken seriously. I indicated to her that her job performance with CETA would be part of her work history and could be used on a resume.

3) At this point in time Jane and I were discussing possible classroom training in the Legal Secretarial program. We had come to this decision as Jane had an interest in the legal system and very much enjoyed clerical work. Her GATB scores showed an aptitude for clerical work. Jane had completed her GED at this time and enrolled in the Legal Secretarial program to begin within the month. Her on-the-job performance with CETA had improved and she seemed to be taking her work seriously.

4) Within two months of her classroom training program, Jane was having problems. I made numerous trips to the school to talk with her and her instructors. She complained of the workload being too heavy and of not being able to keep up. I noted at this time that she had taken a part time evening job to "make extra money." I advised her to quit working as she was receiving the classrom training living allowance and I felt her free time was better spent studying. I then lined her up with a tutor for extra help and rented her a typewritter to use at home to make up tardy work assignments. For the next couple of months things seemed to settle in.

5) I began having more contacts with Jane's instructors, as her grades were falling again. It was their impression that she was not interested in school for academic reasons. They also indicated her absenteeism had increased and when she did come in to school she appeared tired and preoccupied. Jane's perception of their impressions was that they were being unfeeling and unfair to her. She was on academic probation at this time and the school was definately ready to terminate her if her attitude and grades did not improve. I spent much time talking with her about her personal problems, which basically involved recurring breakups with her boyfriend. I explained that she could not continue to be on the CETA program if her grades did not improve. I noted at this time that she had not given up her part-time job. During my next contact with her she indicated that she was pregnant. She said she was quitting school as she couldn't handle it any more and felt she would be eligible for welfare. She had decided to move back home with her parents.

Analysis: The Case of Jane

The dominant characteristics of the client in this case seem to be her dependency and lack of external motivation, pointing toward the descriptor categories "Self Defeating" and "Unresponsive." Her resemblance to the client type labeled "The Kid," in Section IV would suggest the category "Immature" for this client, as well as "Resistance-Lack of Structure," and "Resource Barriers." Toward the end of the case description, her circumstances would also suggest some of the characteristics associated with the client type "Sent by Welfare," in which her willingness to rely on another agency for support becomes a major obstacle to achievement of the counselor's goals.

There is, of course, no guarantee that additional or alternative actions with this client would be any more successful than those taken by the original counselor. Clearly, the counselor's efforts to provide a work experience and to monitor progress on the job represent a reasonable approach. The following plan is offered to show some additional approaches which might enhance the effectiveness of training and work experience in this situation.

Plan

Involve the family

Inform about the world of work and realities of the job market

Assign small achievable tasks

Monitor closely to check out performance

Refer to group dealing with affect and containing positive influential role models who can provide feedback

Place in work experience program

Place in training

Provide resources as needed

Refer to Job Seeking Skills

Place in employment

The major differences between this plan and that followed by the counselor in the case include the suggestion that family members be involved to provide support for the client, and the idea that the client might be started off a bit more slowly with a smaller set of tasks. The plan offered here also includes the possibility of referring the client to an appropriate group to get peer feedback. Such an experience, if available, might help to get the client to "buy into" the program and into her own potential. Her apparent lack of commitment and internal motivation to achieve an independent adult existence, and the option to "take the easy way" by going on welfare makes this a difficult case for the counselor to handle.